

31st March 2025

Subject: An Open Letter to MPs in England re the Planning and Infrastructure Bill

Dear Members of Parliament

As current and past Presidents of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the professional body for ecologists and environmental managers working in the public, private and NGO sectors, we want to draw your attention to serious flaws within the Planning and Infrastructure Bill currently working its way through the parliamentary process.

The UK needs economic growth. It needs houses and infrastructure and development. It also, as demonstrated in the [The Dasgupta Review](#), needs a healthy and resilient natural environment that provides ecosystem services that underpin our economy and contribute to climate resilience. We, as senior representatives of the ecology and environmental management profession, believe that it is possible and necessary to have both. We welcome the Planning and Infrastructure Bill in principle and believe that streamlining the current approach to planning while improving how environmental protection and enhancement is considered for developments could be a genuine win-win. However, as currently drafted, this Bill delivers for neither nature nor development.

We are concerned that this legislation strips away existing local, national and international environmental protections, but offers no detail or security that our natural environment, already in serious decline, will not be sacrificed for the benefit of growth at any cost or consequence. The Bill proposes this full-scale deregulation in exchange for a weak future promise that Natural England would deliver “overall improvement” to nature. No legal protections or obligations are proposed on any party to avoid, mitigate, measure, *or even deliver* any of the proposed improvements. This represents a serious regression of environmental protection *sensu* Environment Act 2021, which the Government has not acknowledged. This lack of detail within the Bill also leads to uncertainty, and risks of delay and judicial review for developers.

The Bill forces Natural England to take into account Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance (not Defra guidance) as and when it is published. This sets the Government, and [MHCLG’s growth priorities](#) above the needs of our natural environment. Natural England will be statutorily bound to protect development profits above the environment.

Furthermore, the Bill’s proposals will significantly undermine the currently growing private sector interest in natural capital investment – funding that is vital to delivering nature recovery at pace and scale.

The Bill appears to be being pushed through parliamentary process at high speed and without appropriate consideration. The Government’s Impact Assessment was filed late and remains unpublished, and the first and second readings have taken place in the absence of the Regulatory Policy Committee’s report on impacts. The proposed [committee stage](#) is short, and the Government

has already indicated it could be shortened further, which appears to indicate an unwillingness to consider any amendments.

We condemn the Government's characterisation of nature, and those concerned with its protection, as vested interests and blockers of development. We call on you, as democratically-elected Members of Parliament, to play your part in ensuring that Part III of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill is paused, to allow the impact of the proposals to be properly assessed, consulted on, piloted, and revised as necessary. Not to do so is highly likely to lead to catastrophic damage to the natural environment on which we all depend.

Should you require any further information please do contact the Institute.

Yours sincerely,

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